
Title: Hartham's Wake

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The Wake for Hartham
the Trainer, slain by the
assassin's blade in Trinsic,
was held today.

CrawWorth did not
arrive when expected,
leading some to question
the emotional state of
the good Captain.

When, at last, he
did arrive, he delivered
the following eulogy for
Hartham: I thank thee
for attending this most
solemn occasion.

When lain to rest amidst
the earth of his home,
Hartham's spirit will no
doubt be lifted all the
higher by the presence of
caring souls such as thee.

Hartham's years of
service as head trainer,
his actions in the great
wars against the Orcs,
and all of his official
recognition are well
known.

They shan't be forgotten
soon. So, I see not the
point of recounting those
things.

Hartham himself did not
care for matters of
state, and loathed
rewards for a job he
felt simply should be
done.

So I will instead tell my
tale of how Hartham
impacted my life.

It is one of countless
stories that many other
Citizens could relay.

A tale I have never told
another soul.

Tightly clasped around the
neck of my person is a
necklace, which Hartham
once wore.

In my hand is an axe he
gave me when I came of
age.

These items mark the
start of my relationship
with Hartham.

When I was but a child,
my family, friends, and
ancestral home of Paws
were destroyed by the
Orcish clan Jugdath'Bru.

I know not of my
Father's fate. He died
with the ragtag defenders
that tried their best to
keep the Orcs from
destroying our town.

My mother was left to
defend the house, and
myself.

It was nightfall when the
Orcs broke through the
defenders.

My mother secreted me
away in a crawlspace in
the kitchen floor used
for storage. Through the
slats in the floor I was
able to see all that
transpired.

My mother had steeled
herself. Armed with a
staff she learned how to
use whilst a Guard in the
service of Lord British,
she protected the home.

When the bloodstained

Jugdath warriors broke
down the door, she felled
three before she was
subdued.

I have never cursed my
sight before, but now
would rather be blind
than have seen what
occurred.

I watched as they pinned
her to the wall with
spears.

I watched as they used
an axe to cut her in
half, from waist to skull.

I watched as they
laughed. I watched
carefully through the haze
of tears that silently
covered my face.

She never uttered a
whisper, save the curse
she laid upon them.

The Orcs began to talk
amongst themselves, I did
not understand them at
the time...but I gathered
that they knew there was
something else alive in
the room.

I backed to the very
rear of the crawlspace
unable to steal my gaze
away from the kitchen.

With snuffling noses they
attempted to pinpoint my
scent. The dull eyes of
one of the Orcs filled
the slats, and he uttered
a cry which, no doubt,
meant he had discovered
me.

It was at that moment a
huge crash was let out.
All I saw was a swinging
flash of gold. This
necklace, swinging around
the neck of the one
whom would rescue me.

A man, nay, a giant, in
full plate mail, a huge
black axe at his side,
burst into the group of
animals. The battle lasted
perhaps a minute.

After he had made short
work of the Orcs, he
stopped to look at what
remained of my mother's
body. my lips.

Wiping a blood stained
hand across his eyes, he
caught the sound of my
grief.

He pulled me from the
crawl space, stared at me
carefully, and said, "Seems
thou art the sole
remaining citizen of
Paws."

He thought for a second
more before saying, "I am
Hartham. Trinsic's finest
have dispatched the Orcs.
The Jugdath'Bru are but
a stain now.

"Alas, thou art the only
representative of Paws I
am able to give this
message to. If we could
have arrived sooner I"

Hartham paused.

"Hast thou any family
that lives? Perchance in
another village?"

I shook my head.

"Then consider me your
diplomatic escort to
Trinsic. Being Paws
official representative,
you will need a guardian
to protect thee in these
troubled times." entire
way to Trinsic.

Having no family of his
own, Hartham raised me

as his only son. He
trained me in the art of
the warrior. He instilled
in me the virtues.

He provided me the tools
and skills I needed to
fulfill the promise I made
to myself when I watched
my mother's murder.

He is the reason I am.

May he rest at long last,
and experience naught but
good drink, and better
hunting.

May the virtues guide and
keep all of thee. Now
Drink! Feast! Make Merry!
Make Hartham's spirit
smile!

For I am as sure as I
breathe that he is
already long tired of this
sentimental speech. At
the end of this speech, a
mysterious figure
appeared in the tavern.
Unwilling to identify
himself he made an
ominous statement: Hear
me petty creatures
of order and fear.
Thine mewling, weak willed
virtues and suffocating
ideologues will at last be
lain to rest. Hartham was
the first course of a
meal whose consumption
WE will take a great
deal of pleasure in
experiencing. Lord British
would rather sacrifice all
of you for a mystical
truth he does not
understand.
Blackthorne would rather
rest on his station and
claim to follow a tenet
he will never truly grasp.

OUR reach has penetrated
the very strata of all
considered to be sacred
by thee. OUR influence

breathes down thine neck.

Hartham is an example of
what is to come.

WE only hope thou wilt
enjoy the next course of
OUR meal as much as
the appetizer.

All of your heroes, all of
your institutions, all of
your ORDER will FALL to
US.

WE are the ZOG CABAL.

WE are LEGION.

WE DEVOUR STRUCTURE.

AND GIVE BACK CHAOS.

MAKE YOUR PEACE
WITH LIFE.

FOR IT SHALL NEVER BE
THE SAME AGAIN.

He then abruptly
disappeared.